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NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.

Platon. Par CLODIUS PIAT. Paris, Félix Alcan, 1906. — pp. 382.

This volume belongs to the series, "Les Grands Philosophes," and bears in general the same character as preceding numbers. It consists of eight chapters: I, The Dialogues; II, Plato's Method; III, The Ideas; IV, Nature; V, God; VI, The Soul; VII, The Good; VIII, The State. M. Piat adds four tables of statistics and a bibliography, the former containing nothing new, the latter both incomplete and marred by almost countless errors.

One is at a loss to know why the book was written. It does not have in a marked degree the virtues of lucidity and charm which we naturally expect in the writings of the French, and it adds little to our knowledge of Plato. In the first chapter the views of Lutoslawski and Gomperz are set down in a brief *résumé*, except that the *Parmenides* is declared to be spurious. M. Piat lays much stress on the want of attestation prior to the catalogue of Thrasyllus, which he regards as open to suspicion; but he seems to approve the suggestion of M. Huit that the dialogue may have been written by a pupil of the academy and added to the canon of Plato, perhaps with the authorization of the master himself (p. 30, n. 2). This would seem to be rather inconsistent, not to use a stronger term.

The systematic presentation of Plato's thought is neither profound nor stimulating. The student of Plato will find this more satisfactorily done in his Zeller, with the advantage of learning what questions are open to controversy, if he does not prefer to follow the evolution of the philosopher's somewhat unsystematic thought in the dialogues themselves or in such analyses as are presented by Grote and Gomperz.

M. Piat's book will not bear comparison with the admirable accounts of Plato's philosophy lately published by Gomperz and Raeder.

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Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy of Life. By W. R. BOYCE-GIBSON. London, A. & C. Black, 1906. — pp. viii, 168.

This little volume, the chapters of which were originally lectures delivered before the University of London in 1905, has been published under the auspices of the Hibbert trustees. It might almost be regarded as the tribute of a disciple to his master, were it not that Mr. Boyce-Gibson is more attached to the doctrine than to its propounder. He states his conviction of its "vitality and fundamental soundness." Professor Eucken's teaching seems to him to offer the needed rallying-point for contemporary Idealism, and to be "the philosophy of the future, if the future proves worthy of it."

It is true that this attitude does not exclude certain important criticisms of Eucken's method and of some of his conclusions ; but, as the author himself points out, this criticism is throughout sympathetic, and aims at exposition and development to a consistent conclusion rather than at close adherence to the actual form of the argument. He is doubtless correct in his opinion that this is by far the more valuable method to follow, particularly when the discussion of an author is necessarily confined within narrow limits. Its obvious dangers for the careless reader may be presumed to be overcome in this case by the explicit statement that it is the method of the book ; those for the writer seem to have been for the most part successfully avoided. The fact that Professor Eucken personally revised the manuscript may serve as an assurance of substantial accuracy.

The most compact definition of Eucken's philosophy, according to Mr. Boyce-Gibson, is as a Christian Idealism, which finds its chief interests in history, ethics, and religion, and the organizing ideas of which are personality and freedom. Its method is teleological, in much the same sense that the dialectic of Hegel may be so termed. But in this case analysis always involves the connection of all the elements of a problem with the personal ethical attitude for which it arises, and is followed by a synthesis which is based on the development of this underlying personal ideal, so to say, to its highest possible power. This development of an ideal from within, by revealing its essential limitations and contradictions, indicates the necessity of pressing on to a higher systematization of experience, and becomes an immanent dialectic. This dialectic, however, is never merely reflective, for the transition from any one stage to the next higher is always a free ethical act, and involves a *negation* of the lower stage which persists throughout the whole process. Every "spiritual fact is either potentially or actually a spiritual opposition" ; and the dualism of sense and thought which confronts the personal thinker and agent on the lower levels of his development remains with him, though in a changed form, on the very highest.

The major portion of the book is given up to an account of Eucken's system as he develops it by the application of this method to two great problems,—Personalism *vs.* Naturalism and Intellectualism, and Freedom *vs.* Necessity. The exposition is clear and readable throughout, though somewhat marred, especially in the earlier chapters, by an occasional looseness of style and construction which is pardonable in lectures, but should have been removed before printing. Not the least valuable portions of the book are the author's own critical emendations of Eucken's theory, particularly those concerned with the 'irrationalism' in which it culminates, and the abstract separation between the 'psychological' and the 'spiritual,' the 'existential' and the 'substantial,' with which it begins. He very properly points out that Eucken's own account of the knowledge-process, as immanent in the developing personal realization of spiritual truth, is inconsistent with his position that this realization at its highest stage, while personal, is 'irrational.' As for the other antithesis, here Eucken's over-

narrow conception of psychological method, as necessarily atomistic, and his neglect of the possibility of a more concrete and functional account of consciousness, has led him into unnecessary difficulties in relating his 'non-temporal' spiritual principle to its temporal manifestations.

It is to be regretted that the account of Eucken's views concerning the relation of man to God (pp. 102-103) is not fuller and more detailed. As it stands, it does not by any means make clear how he would assimilate these to his description of a *Vollthat*, as involving a synthesis which unites and transcends subjective activity and objective content, either of which is in itself incomplete, in a personal act of self-realization. In this case, the object is already spiritual and personal. The difficulty resulting for Professor Eucken's theory is sufficiently obvious; and, if the present writer may hazard a guess, it probably underlies that tendency towards 'absolutism' in his later works which Mr. Boyce-Gibson notices, and which he regards as only another return upon itself of the system's dialectic. It may also have emphasized Eucken's preference for an irrational test of truth in religious experience.

But whether or not we assent to the author's conclusions concerning the future influence of Eucken's philosophy, this statement of it should find many readers, as a very compact and useful *résumé* of the interesting and stimulating point of view.

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Some Problems of Existence. By NORMAN PEARSON. London, Edward Arnold; New York, Longmans, Green, & Co., 1907. — pp. viii, 168.

This little book sketches a philosophy of religion from the standpoint of theistic evolution. The questions discussed are such as "inevitably present themselves to anyone who seriously considers the problem of human existence." The postulates — or conclusions? — of the author's theory are: "(1) The existence of a Deity; (2) the immortality of man; (3) a Divine scheme of evolution of which we form part, and which, as expressing the purpose of the Deity, proceeds under the sway of an inflexible order" (p. 2). With these principles in hand, Mr. Pearson finds singularly facile answers to the questions of the mind. Chapters i-iv deal with the future life, human and animal, which is treated on the basis of the mind-stuff theory, accepted in its baldest form. Chapter v, "Spirit and Matter," argues to an ultimate monism, human minds and mind-stuff being on the way declared to possess extension. Chapters vi-viii advance a new analysis of morality, punishment, and sin, with special reference to the eschatological inquiries which engage the attention of the author throughout. Chapter ix maintains at once the truth of determinism and its compatibility with moral responsibility. Chapter xi explains the existence of evil by construing it as a result of the self-limitation of the Deity which serves an educational purpose in the evolution of the spirit.